

Rockford Historic Preservation Commission

February 2, 2010 – 6:00 PM
Conference Room B
Rockford City Hall

Present	Janna Bailey, Scott Sanders, Maureen Flanagan, David Hagney, Vickie Krueger
Absent	Doug Mark, Mark McInnis
Staff	Ginny Gregory, Reid Montgomery, John Giliberti
Others	Beverly Broyles and Garrett Jones (Tinker Swiss Cottage Museum), Chandler Anderson (Garrison Lofts), Steth Huebner (803 Ridgewood)

Election of Officers

David Hagney made a **MOTION** to **RETAIN** Maureen Flanagan as Chairman and David Hagney as Vice Chair. The motion was seconded by Janna Bailey and **CARRIED** by a vote of 5-0.

Approval of minutes

Scott Sanders made a **MOTION** to **APPROVE** the minutes of the December 1, 2009 meeting. The motion was seconded by Janna Bailey and **CARRIED** by a vote of 5-0.

NEW BUSINESS

Certificate of Appropriateness – 411 Kent Street – Tinker Swiss Cottage Museum

Beverly Broyles explained the Museum wanted to add a wheelchair accessible path from the Cottage to the suspension bridge. The wheelchair accessible path is mandated by the grant from IDNR as well as the grant from IDOT to create the bridge and the railroad gardens.

Beverly introduced the material that will be used for the path, exposed aggregate concrete. This matches the existing path that goes under the east stairwell and up to the main entrance of the cottage. It has the look of a pebbled surface.

Janna asked if Tinker Swiss had any plans for interpretation of the historic cobblestone path that would need to be removed for the new path. Garrett Jones explained the cobblestone will be placed on either side of the path. On the south side a black fence would retain its current position. A handrail approved by the Illinois Accessibility Code would need to be added on the outside of the path here as this particular portion of the sidewalk is greater than a 1:20 pitch. Garrett mentioned there would be about 15-18" of cobble on each side of the path. On the inside that amount varies because there is a limestone wall (which will be retained).

Beverly stated the Museum staff looked into the possibility of avoiding the cobblestone path altogether, but all options severely increased the cost to the Museum. A portion of the cobblestone path would still need to be removed at the entrance to the bridge.

Scott noted that it is not ideal to have this as close to the white oak as it will be, but there is no real alternative and the approach being taken – using Cambistat® – should give it the best chance of surviving. He asked if there was a time frame for construction. Garrett replied the Museum wanted to begin the project during the upcoming construction season.

Janna asked if it was possible to paint the fence to match the cottage rather than to blend in. Garrett was open to painting it any color. Beverley was reminded of another fence at the Museum which was painted black. With the fence painted black it seems to disappear from the view. Garrett indicated green and brown fencing shows up more than it blends. Since there was no color requirement on the handrail, both Garrett and Beverley were open to testing several colors. Beverley thought the brown used on the Cottage trim might be a good color.

David Hagney made a **MOTION** to **APPROVE** the Certificate of Appropriateness as submitted. The motion was seconded by Vickie Krueger and **CARRIED** by a vote of **5-0**.

Certificate of Appropriateness – 1105 North Court Street – Garrison Lofts

Chandler explained the Zoning Division for the City of Rockford suggested he get formal approval for his fencing plan at Garrison Lofts, even though he already has a special use permit for the entire site and has already placed the fencing on the property. He directed the Commission's attention to the last two pages of his application which show pictures of the fencing he used and the area of the property where each type of fencing is placed. He apologized for not applying for a Certificate of Appropriateness prior to installing the fencing and explained he was unaware one was required.

Ginny stated the steel fence (type number one on the application), which goes around the school and gym, did receive approval from the Commission, but the other types did not.

Scott asked how tall fence numbers two, three and four were. Chandler replied they were six foot or slightly less.

Maureen asked if the wooden fencing will be painted. Chandler replied they would be painted, but mentioned the wood was treated lumber which requires it to breathe for a year before being painted.

David Hagney made a **MOTION** to **APPROVE** the Certificate of Appropriateness, subject to zoning approval. The motion was seconded by Scott Sanders and **CARRIED** by a vote of **5-0**.

Certificate of Appropriateness - 803 Ridgewood Road

Steth Huebner, the owner of 803 Ridgewood, requested advice on his house. It's on the corner of Ridgewood and Greenmount. He wanted to replace his roof and the Commission informed him he would need a Certificate of Appropriateness before replacing it. He also would like to repaint the home and remove the awnings that were added in the 1950s and were not part of the original home.

Ginny explained that although his house was not historic, because it was in a historic district he would need a Certificate of Appropriateness to change the way something on the exterior looks, or to change the material it is made of. This includes the awnings on his home, the roof and the French doors. The Commission decided to approve his request even though he hadn't completed an application for a Certificate of Appropriateness.

Scott Sanders made a **MOTION** to **APPROVE** the removal of the awnings in the front of the house. The motion was seconded by Vickie Krueger and **CARRIED** by a vote of **5-0**.

Training

Ginny Gregory and John Giliberti gave an update of legal issues to the Commission. The contents of their presentation are attached.

During the presentation, John made it clear that if you express a professional opinion on a topic, you must indicate that your knowledge comes from your training or education and you're not just "shooting from the hip." He also emphasized the importance of making decisions based on what is officially in the record, either as part of an application or as part of what was discussed during a public meeting or hearing.

Maureen asked if there were copies of the legal points in their manuals. Ginny indicated there were not, but their manuals contained a more technical synopsis of legal issues. Ginny suggested emailing the presentation to the Commission members.

Section 106 Review – 534 Division Street

Ginny explained that the Rockford Housing Authority, as part of their Hope VI application, would like to move the house at 534 Division Street, which was built in 1852, to a new site so that they can close Division Street. Two sites suggested are at 521 College Avenue or 727 South Third Street. Both properties are city-owned and are buildable lots.

Scott asked if the 727 South 3rd Street property was just the parcel outlined in blue on the map she had provided. Ginny replied it was this parcel plus the property immediately to the north of it. Scott asked if moving the house to this property would afford it the opportunity to be oriented on its long access as it is now. Ginny believed that would be the case. She further stated the property would have to be sideways at 521 College Avenue.

Ginny explained that, according to Section 106 regulations, the properties must be reviewed for historic merit since federal funds would be involved. Even though the house hasn't been designated as historic, it definitely has historic merit and is in the historic survey so IHPA has asked for the Commission's comments.

Janna stated the architecture matched better on College, but the house can't be facing the same way as the other homes in the area.

Maureen asked if the property was occupied. Ginny wasn't sure but stated the single family home was owned by HUD.

Scott preferred moving the home to 727 South Third Street, as he believed the orientation of the house to the street was the most significant factor.

Scott Sanders made a **MOTION** to **APPROVE** the statement below. The motion was seconded by Janna Bailey and **CARRIED** by a vote of **5-0**.

If the choices for 534 Division Street are, "move it or lose it," then the Commission prefers to move the house to 727 South Third Street to retain proper frontage.

Annual Report

David Hagney made a **MOTION** to **APPROVE** the 2009 Annual Report. The motion was seconded by Vickie Kreuger and **CARRIED** by a vote of **5-0**.

Updating application forms for landmarks and historic districts

Ginny indicated she needed to update parts of the forms for landmarks and historic districts. Specifically, she felt it important to modify references to photography to allow digital photographs and to add a section for specifying the period of significance for a landmark or district. She asked the Commission to review the proposed changes and to vote on it at the next meeting.

OLD BUSINESS

Chick Hotel

Ginny indicated the owners of Chick Hotel have received the letter from Kevin Ciabatti's, the City's Building Official, outlining the steps that will be taken to stabilize the front of 119 South Main Street. This will not result in any exterior changes to the structure so no Certificate of Appropriateness will be needed.

Update on Violations – 400 block Kishwaukee Street

Ginny stated she drove by the properties and they look the same as they did three months ago. She asked John Giliberti if the owner has paid the fine. John would look into it. The Code Hearing Officer has levied a fine of roughly \$18,000 on the properties for failure to meet all requirements.

Ginny explained the houses have been painted but repairs such as the porch railings, steps and stabilization of the foundations have not been completed.

Maureen asked if the violations were public record. Ginny indicated they were and mentioned she received a FOIA request on the 1st but since the Commission's file hasn't been closed Ginny couldn't release the records. She explained the minutes were on the City's website so the requestor could see what actions have been taken.

STAFF REPORT

Design Guidelines

Ginny reminded the Commission that she had completed a summary of every action taken by this Commission in regards to Certificates of Appropriateness. Depending on the time frame, there are up to three separate sets of guidelines that have been used. She hopes to complete the review of Commission decisions and, where necessary, revise the current design guidelines before she retires at the end of July, 2010.

Ginny explained the budget cuts will require her to stop printing so many documents. She suggested publishing HPC documents on an extranet site that Commission members could access. The Commission seemed to approve of this idea. Ginny mentioned she would continue to bring 1-2 document packets with her to every meeting.

With no further business, David Hagney made a **MOTION** to adjourn. The motion was seconded by Scott Sanders and **CARRIED** by a vote of **5-0**. The meeting ended at 7:15p.m.